

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is going beyond sound doctrine.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of February 14, 2015*

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. And *this is love: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.* For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. *Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.* Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

The children of your elect sister greet you. (2 John 1:1–13 emphasis added)

2.

While traveling across northern Missouri in 2000 CE, I listened to a Protestant Evangelist “explain” how the Commandments of whom Paul identified as the Rock that was Christ (1 Cor 10:4); the Rock that followed Israel and that spoke from atop Mount Sinai the Ten Living Words—I listened as this self-identified teacher of Israel explained why the Ten Commandments were not the Commandments of Christ Jesus, who left the following Commandment with His disciples:

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.* Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:9–14 emphasis added)

The Elder writes the Elect Lady: “this is love: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it” (2 John 1:6).

Christians are to love one another, a task made more difficult by Christians not being born of spirit, or at best being spiritual infants:

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. (1 Cor 3:1–5)

The implication of what Paul wrote to the holy ones at Corinth is that a person of the flesh [a person not born of spirit] and an infant son of God are virtually indistinguishable. Neither understand the things of God. Both are subject to jealousy and strife. Both will identify themselves with a “label” in this world, such as Republican or Democrat, Methodist or Southern Baptist, Socialist or Capitalist, Catholic or Lutheran—

Who can honestly say that Joseph Smith or Ellen G. White or William Miller—all prominent Christian figures in the 19th-Century—were servants of Christ Jesus through whom endtime disciples have come to the Lord? Certainly Latter Day Saints will affirm that they have come to Christ through the words of the prophet Joseph Smith. Likewise, Seventh Day Adventists will affirm that they have come to Christ through the prophesying of Ellen G. White. However, William Miller doesn't have as loyal of a following.

In Latter Day Saints maintaining their identity as *Latter Day Saints* they establish Paul's words to the holy ones at Corinth: they cannot be addressed as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

In Seventh Day Adventists maintaining their identity as *Seventh Day Adventists* they confirm Paul's words that they are people of the flesh, infants in Christ. Likewise, in former members of Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God maintaining their “COG” [Church of God] identity they strongly argue that they are people of the flesh—they hold to the doctrine that they are not infants in Christ for they insist that they have not been born of spirit, and this is true. None of them still clinging to Armstrong's teachings have been born of spirit. All are disciples who have been left behind; left tethered to the things of this world.

Yet at the end of the age, there will be seven named Churches that are the seven horns on the head of the slain Lamb (Rev 5:6), but these seven Churches have only one Head so in reality these seven are really one that display attributes that divide one from

another in a similar way to how geographical distance separates Anchorage from Atlanta from Albany from Augusta from Albuquerque.

Philadelphia was one of seven named geographical locations of 1st-Century assemblies of Christ Jesus; *Philadelphia* is today one of seven named theological coordinates of 21st-Century assemblies of Christ. And *Philadelphia* has an endtime work to do, a work it is presently doing and will continue to do, that of proclaiming the endtime good news [gospel] that all who endure to the end shall be saved, the good news that must be proclaimed to the world as a witness to all nations before the end comes (Matt 24:13–14). This is Jesus' word about His Endurance, the last 1260 days of seven endtime years of tribulation. This is the message delivered to the third part of humanity (from Zech 13:9), none of whom are today *Christian*, this third part constituting the greatest portion of the harvest of firstfruits raised to life at the Second Advent.

That is what's sad about the work with which *Philadelphia* has been tasked: greater Christendom will not return to the Christianity of 1st-Century Nazarenes. Will not! Absolutely won't. The vast majority of Christians within greater Christendom theologically descend from those false apostles who went ahead, went beyond where the Elder and the first apostles were in the 1st-Century—and what happened? These false apostles were received by the children of the Elect Lady, in particular by those children who were not walking in truth: again, *I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father* (v. 4). Some were. Some were not. And it is from those who were not walking in truth that Diotrephes comes:

The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.* Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth. ***I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.*** So if I come, *I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us.* And not content with that, *he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.* Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name. (3 John 1:1–15 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Endtime disciples do not know what it was that the Elder wrote to the Church, with the possibility existing that 2nd John was this *something*, the Elder having written to the Elect Lady but Diotrephes intercepting this *something* and then refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Elder, with the possibility being that the false apostles about whom the Elder warned the Elect Lady already having arrived at the congregation and already having been received by Diotrephes and already discrediting the Elder who

refused to embrace their “new truth.” This then would necessitate the Elder writing to a faithful member in the congregation, Gaius, who continues to walk in the truth.

Diotrephes, who apparently placed himself in the position of being the pastor of the congregation, had taken to himself the authority to stop members from supporting intenerate missionaries, even to excommunicating those who would support these missionaries walking in the truth.

The wolves, by being wolves, had stepped into the void created by having no hierarchy within Christian fellowships: the wolves placed themselves between the sheep and the true Shepherd, determining for the sheep what was and what would be sound doctrine, thus marginalizing through the creed, the canon, and the clergy those converts who walk/walked as Jesus walked in this world.

Philadelphia cannot address 8th-day Christians as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh ... this is a problem; for *Philadelphians* have pledged their lives and their prosperity for greater Christendom’s liberation from indwelling sin and death. Yet, most Christians within greater Christendom sincerely believe *Philadelphians* are legalists when they walk in this world as Christ Jesus, an observant Jew, walked, not at all realizing that to walk any other way is to walk as a son of disobedience, consigned to disobedience as a slave of sin—consigned to the second death.

Who is the Christian within greater Christendom that abides in the teaching of Christ Jesus? Certainly no one that lives in this world as a Gentile; as a person of the nations, a person of common humanity.

The Elder in addressing the Elect Lady and her children, some of whom walked in the truth—but not all—informs endtime disciples about what took late 1st-Century Christendom so far from Christ Jesus: those converts who went ahead [who went beyond] sound doctrine ended up being received by Christian fellowships, such as the fellowship at Corinth.

I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. (2 Cor 11:2–6)

In the late 1st-Century and in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries, did not proto-orthodox—and later, orthodox [correct belief]—Christians repeatedly prevent Christ Jesus from entering their fellowships by the simple act of assembling together when Christ wasn’t present?

There are plenty of endtime examples of Christians excluding Christ from their services ... why did the Lord, the God of living ones, bring His servant Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem?

For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the Lord has come to me, and I [Jeremiah] have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the Lord persistently sent to you all His servants the prophets,

saying, “Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.” *Yet you have not listened to me that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.* Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: *Because you have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.* (Jer 25:3–11 — the direct address of the Lord is italicized)

As David occasionally did in his writings, Jeremiah merges his voice with that of the Lord, moving mechanically from what is physical [Jeremiah’s voice] to what is spiritual [the direct address of the Lord], with Jeremiah citing as a quotation the spiritual portion of his physical presentation that forms the shadow and copy of the direct address of the Lord, also having a physical and a spiritual portion, with Nebuchadnezzar as the servant of the Lord being in the physical portion of the spiritual presentation.

The spiritual portion of the spiritual presentation will have the Lord telling Jeremiah, “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them” (Jer 25:15–16).

How would the Elder have banished Diotrefes from the fellowship over which he, Diotrefes, held authority, a fellowship that was being turned from recognizing the Elder as a person able to rightly judge a spiritual matter? This question is germane today when many Sabbatarian Christians are going beyond sound doctrine and placing importance on physical utterances, using bastardized Hebrew pronunciations for the name of Christ Jesus and being so foolish as to attempt pronouncing the linguistic determinative <YHWH>?

The Adversary’s strategy of deception was simple: because of Jewish rebellion against Roman authority beginning about 66 CE, Roman persecution of Jews and all things Jewish escalated until Bar Kokhba’s Revolt [the Third Jewish-Roman War] (ca 132–135 CE) caused Emperor Hadrian to abolish Scripture, the practices of Judaism, and the sacred calendar. Many practicing Jews were taken into slavery; many perished physically. And Judaizing Christians [Christians walking in this world as Jesus walked] were pushed to the cultural margins of the Empire ... the *Diotrefeses* of Christianity, with help from Emperor Hadrian, excluded from Christian fellowships so-called Judaizing Christians, leaving disemboweled assemblies Jesus built littering the field of history, these assemblies spiritually dead since the turn of the century (ca 101–102 CE).

What greater Christendom has failed to consider is that the enemies of Israel could not prevail against Israel for as long as Moses lead Israel, with the sons of Korah noting this phenomenon:

O God, we have heard with our ears,
Our fathers have told us,
What deeds you performed in their days,

In the days of old:
You with your own hand drove out the nations,
 But them [our fathers] you planted;
You afflicted the peoples,
 But them [our fathers] you set free;
For not by their own sword did they win the land,
 Nor did their own arm save them,
But your right hand and your arm,
 And the light of your face,
 For you delighted in them.
You are my King, O God;
 Ordain salvation for Jacob!
Through you we push down our foes;
 Through your name we tread down those who rise up against us.
For not in my bow do I trust,
 Nor can my sword save me.
But you have saved us from our foes
 And have put to shame those who hate us.
In God we have boasted continually,
 And we will give thanks to your name forever. Selah.

But you have rejected us and disgraced us
 And have not gone out with our armies.
You have made us turn back from the foe,
 And those who hate us have gotten spoil.
You have made us like sheep for slaughter
 And have scattered us among the nations.
You have sold your people for a trifle,
 Demanding no high price for them.
You have made us the taunt of our neighbors,
 The derision and scorn of those around us.
You have made us a byword among the nations,
 A laughingstock among the peoples.
All day long my disgrace is before me,
 And shame has covered my face
At the sound of the taunter and reviler,
 At the sight of the enemy and the avenger.
All this has come upon us,
 Though we have not forgotten you,
 And we have not been false to your covenant.
Our heart has not turned back,
 Nor have our steps departed from your way;
Yet you have broken us in the place of jackals
 And covered us with the shadow of death.
If we had forgotten the name of our God
 Or spread out our hands to a foreign god,
Would not God discover this?
 For He knows the secrets of the heart.
Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long;

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.
Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!
Why do you hide your face?
Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?
For our soul is bowed down to the dust;
Our belly clings to the ground.
Rise up; come to our help!
Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!

(Ps 44:1–26 indented lines represent the spiritual portion of couplets)

The first eight verses pertain to Israel under Moses; pertain to the history of Israel taught to succeeding generations. But verses 9 through 26 pertain to the reality under which Israel lived roughly four centuries after Moses ... the Lord was not fighting for Israel; was not delivering His people as He had in the days of Moses. And the Sons of Korah wanted to know why; for they (to the best of their knowledge) had not forgotten the name of the Lord; had not been false to the covenant; have been faithful in all that was expected of them. Thus, in their eyes, the Lord was at fault for ignoring them. The Lord needed to wake up and get about doing what He promised He would do for them: *Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! ... Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?*

Why would the Lord not hear the prayers of Israel and respond to them?

Consider the following:

In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of [YHWH], saying, "Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may count the money that has been brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people. And let it be given into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord, and let them give it to the workmen who are at the house of the Lord, repairing the house (that is, to the carpenters, and to the builders, and to the masons), and let them use it for buying timber and quarried stone to repair the house. But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly."

And Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord." *Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.* And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For *great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.*" (2 Kings 22:3–13 emphasis added)

And,

And the king commanded all the people, "Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." For *no such Passover had been kept since the days*

of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was kept to [YHWH] in Jerusalem. (2 King 23:21–23 emphasis added)

When the Sons of Korah demanded that the Lord wake up and live up to His end of the covenant Israel made with Him, the Sons of Korah were not keeping the Passover as Moses commanded ... Pharisees were not keeping the Passover as Moses commanded in the 1st-Century CE; so why would the Lord fight for Israel when Israel had for so long neglected to keep the Passover as Moses commanded?

At what point is good intentions alone sufficient for salvation? At what point is self-identification as a Christian enough to cause the Lord to protect a people? As a real-time example, is self-identification as a *Christian* enough to cause the Lord to protect an eighth-day believer in northern Syria from ISIS terrorists? No, it is not! For Christians in northern Syria are being slaughtered as sheep; are being tortured in ways that no one would a sheep intended to be eaten. And while it is seemingly logical for every Christian to identify himself or herself with *Christians* being brutalized by ISIS terrorists in Iraq and Syria, the Christian truly born of spirit cannot regardless of how much the son of God wants-to ... ISIS terrorists, today, are lucky that the Adversary remains the prince of this world; for if the genuine sons of God had the power they will have, these ISIS terrorists would have fire come from their bellies, thereby reducing them to ashes forever. And that will be their fate when their judgments are revealed. No future repentance by them will save them. They are condemned for what they have done in the name of Allah, with the authority to hold or to release sins given to Jesus' disciples when He breathed His breath on them (John 20:20–23). Their sins are from henceforth held.

Persecution comes upon Christians for the testing and for the correction of disciples—for the correction of disciples who, like the Sons of Korah, believe that they had not broken covenant with the Lord when they have. For of all the Christians in Syria and Iraq, how many took the Passover last year after the example Jesus left with His disciples, eating broken unleavened bread and drinking from the cup on the First Unleavened, the Preparation Day for the great Sabbath of the Sabbath? Did any? Certainly most did not. So why would these Christians truly expect Christ to deliver them from ISIS terrorists when they have for centuries [millennia] ignored Him? That makes no sense at all, to expect to be delivered by the God the Christian snubs. Yet that is what's expected of the Father and the Son—and when God does not deliver these Christians as expected, these Christians chalk-up the Lord's failure to protect them to the Lord trying their faith to see if they will be faithful even to death by horrific torture. And this is stupid on their part when every Christian has the example of what happened to Jews during the period when the Book of the Covenant was lost in a dilapidated temple.

It has been to the Roman Church's advantage [same for the Greek and Syrian Churches] to rewrite the history of the first three centuries of the Common Era, untangling the entwined histories of nascent Christianity and rabbinical Judaism when the difference between a Christian and a Jew was not phenomenologically discernable—both Christian and Jew lived as observant Judeans. They were as unborn twins struggling for personal identity and secular prominence, sharing the same spiritual umbilical cord, with Christian texts and Jewish texts being virtually impossible

for Gentile authorities to distinguish one from the other even after Hadrian's decrees. Thus, it took into the 4th-Century CE before significant separation existed and orthodox bishops could declare Judaizing Christians heretics and have their declarations accepted by congregations.

When the Elder wrote to the Elect Lady, then to Gaius, there were neither *Judaism* nor *Christianity* as later adherents to these ideologies would know their religion ... Christianity and Judaism never separated from each other as the Greek Church and the Latin Church separated in the 11th-Century, or as Lutherans separated from the Roman Church in the 16th-Century. Rather, Christianity drifted away from Rabbinical Judaism, without either really understanding the other, with the number of Christians walking in the truth when the Elder wrote to the Elect Lady probably being about 7,000, based on a 40% per year growth rate from the probable number of converts to nascent Christianity by the fourth decade of the 1st-Century.

The number of converts seen in Acts is the production of a Sophist novelist, nothing more.

How do endtime Sabbatarian disciples striving to recover 1st-Century nascent Christianity get past thinking physically and begin to think spiritually ... they don't—unless they have truly been born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus in the form of His spirit [*pneuma Christou*] entering into and penetrating their spirit, *to pneuma tou 'anthropou* in each of them. Otherwise, they simply cannot understand spiritual matters any more than rabbinical Judaism can.

It was through successive ventures of false apostles going beyond where the truth walked, personified in the walk of some of the children of the Elect Lady and of her Elect Sister, that Christendom separated itself from Judaism, this separation taking most of three centuries—and then the Christendom that controlled the name <*Christian*> was neither of God nor of Christ Jesus, but was a bastardized ideology that borrowed heavily from Greek paganism and from Chaldean Mysteries.

So today, nearing the middle of the second decade of the 21st-Century, how does a *Philadelphian* relate to a Catholic or to a Methodist or perhaps of more importance, to a Mormon; for it will be Latter Days Saints that leverage food into discipleship when the currency of America and Western European nations collapse. How should a *Philadelphian* respond when asked about the hope that lays within the person? How much should be said? How much is too much; too little? And why didn't the Elder write more about the teaching of those false apostles who had gone beyond the truth?

These questions may not, today, have good answers. For how can any person [not an Islamic terrorist] not feel empathy for Coptic Christians beheaded for their ideology? Or for a Jordanian pilot burned in a cage? The person's humanity demands that he or she does more than play another round of golf when a journalist is beheaded ...

The world stood by, figuratively twiddling its thumbs, while Nazis murdered millions of Jews and Slavs. And the world said to itself afterwards, *Never again*. But the world lied to itself as two plus million Cambodians were murdered by their government. The world lied to itself during the Rwandan Genocide, when in a 100-day period beginning in April 1994, approximately a million Rwandans were murdered: 70% of the Tutsi then living in Rwanda. And the world is again lying to itself as ISIS terrorists slay moderate

Sunni Muslims, Shia' Muslims, Christians, and whomever else they can capture or buy from other terrorist organizations.

But in lying to itself, the world reveals the nature of its still-reigning prince, the Adversary, a liar from the beginning.

Philadelphians need to be aware of the reality that it will be other Christians that betray them during the Affliction that follows the Second Passover liberation of Israel ... but as Jesus washed the feet of Judas Iscariot before the devil entered into Judas, *Philadelphians* will have to do what they can to physically feed and spiritually save Christians of greater Christendom following the Second Passover. So what *Philadelphians* will need is the power and authority of the two witnesses as their cover until dominion over the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man; for the power and authority of the two witnesses will come from them spiritually standing on either side of the glorified Christ as the sons of new oil.

More needs to be said about what the Elder wrote to the Elect Lady.

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